

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6395

As of January 23, 2018

Title: An act relating to establishing a statewide steelhead endorsement program.

Brief Description: Establishing a statewide steelhead endorsement program.

Sponsors: Senator Van De Wege.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources & Parks: 1/22/18.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Establishes a \$5 statewide recreational steelhead endorsement.
- Provides revenues for the enforcement of recreational steelhead fisheries.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, WATER, NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS

Staff: Curt Gavigan (786-7437)

Background: Role of the Department of Fish and Wildlife. The Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) manages the state's fish and wildlife resources. Among other duties, DFW must classify wildlife and establish the basic rules and regulations governing the time, place, manner, and methods used to harvest or enjoy fish and wildlife.

Fishing Licenses. All individuals 15-years old and older are required to purchase a personal use fishing license prior to recreationally fishing for or possessing fish. There are a number of personal use fishing licenses available, including a freshwater license, saltwater license, and combination license.

Endorsement, Permit, and Surcharge Programs. In various instances, the Legislature has provided a dedicated funding source for specific fish and wildlife management activities by requiring stamps, permits, or surcharges in addition to a hunting or fishing license. For example, fishers are required to purchase an endorsement to fish for salmon and steelhead on the Columbia River and its tributaries. A person must obtain an endorsement in addition to a

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fishing license. Revenues fund salmon and steelhead monitoring, permitting, enforcement, and other actions necessary to provide fishing opportunities in the endorsement area.

Summary of Bill: An endorsement program is created to fish recreationally for steelhead in the state. The endorsement is required for anyone of the age required to purchase a fishing license, unless the person is fishing in an area where the Columbia River salmon and steelhead endorsement is required. The statutory fee for the steelhead endorsement is \$5.

Funds from the steelhead endorsement are deposited in a new, non-appropriated account. DFW may use the account for the enforcement of recreational steelhead fisheries.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 12, 2018

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Steelhead conservation is critical. There is a need for additional enforcement resources, but also for monitoring funds as well. The Olympic Peninsula is a unique area with great fishing opportunities, and the resource needs to be preserved and protected. This bill is valuable because it ensures that money will be devoted to enforcement.

OTHER: There are real issues impacting steelhead fishing that need to be addressed, although there may be hesitation among fishers to pay for an endorsement with such limited opportunity out there.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Kevin Van De Wege, Prime Sponsor; Nick Chambers, Trout Unlimited; Kelly Cunningham, Department of Fish and Wildlife.

OTHER: Scott Sigmon, Coastal Conservation Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.